

From: [Adam Klein](#)
To: [Commissioners](#)
Subject: Letter to Commissioners: DPS Foundation
Date: Saturday, August 22, 2020 6:50:05 PM

Dear Durham County Commissioners,

We, members of the Board of the Durham Public Schools Foundation, are writing to express our strong support for the request before you to provide funding as well as staffing and space support for Durham HOPE Centers. As we close the first week of 100% remote digital instruction for DPS students, we know that we are only at the beginning of what will be a challenging and unpredictable school year. This will be true for all of our 33,000 students across DPS but we know our families facing increased economic hardship during this crisis and our most vulnerable students have the most to lose in this moment.

We ask that the County provide funding as well as staffing and space support to ensure HOPE Centers are available and free to our most vulnerable DPS students who need the space and adult supervision to successfully access their online learning, as well as social-emotional supports and daily meals. While the HOPE Centers must be--and will be--a community wide effort, it is our view that Durham County is positioned to provide the largest share of funding necessary for DPS and community partners to deliver this model. We ask that the County lead the way in making this so.

The County and our whole community are responding to the unprecedented challenges that this pandemic has caused in so many ways that reflect the way Durham is innovative and committed to an equitable recovery. We believe that a large and critical piece of our equitable recovery must be providing safe, nurturing places for students to access their online learning. Our community has a responsibility to provide this space to our most vulnerable students who require it in order to successfully access their online learning and to our families experiencing a childcare crisis and facing impossible decisions about whether to go to work or provide necessary supervision and support to young children doing online learning.

If our community fails to deliver a response to this critical need we will see a loss of learning and the wide impacts from a lack of social-emotional support for our most vulnerable students that will have lifelong implications on their earnings and well being as well as on our local economy.

As Durham does, our community has begun coming together to respond to this need. The Durham HOPE Centers model has been developed through a partnership of Durham Public Schools, Student U, YMCA, Durham Children's Initiative, Made in Durham, Emily K, and Boys and Girls Club. The DPS Foundation will play a leading role in rallying our community to support HOPE Centers as part of the Accelerating Digital Equity campaign and will raise funds to support partners on the ground doing the work with students and families. These privately raised funds will help ensure students who need free access to HOPE Centers don't have any barriers to accessing them.

While we are urging the County to provide the largest portion of support for HOPE Centers, we know that meeting the full scope of this need will also require significant investment from our whole community. In addition to the private fundraising that DPS Foundation is leading to support this effort, we are also engaging DPS and Durham City around support they can provide for HOPE Centers.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal amidst the incredible array of needs you all are addressing for the Durham community through this crisis.

Durham Public Schools Foundation Board of Directors

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